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| **From:** | Ara Mihranian |
| **Sent time:** | 08/19/2019 02:13:57 PM |
| **To:** | Amy Seeraty |
| **Subject:** | FW: Trump National Golf Club |
| **Attachments:** | CAGN&CAWR Surveys Report TNGC 2019_TidalInfluence 8-15-19.pdf |

**Ara Michael Mihranian**
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**From:** Lili Amini <lamini@trumpnational.com>
**Sent:** Friday, August 16, 2019 10:13 AM
**To:** So Kim <SoK@rpvca.gov>; Amy Seeraty <AmyS@rpvca.gov>
**Subject:** Trump National Golf Club

Hi So and Amy,
Attached is the 2019 annual report for Cactus Wren and California Gnatcatcher surveys. Can you double check to see if you the 2 surveys are still ok for 2019?

Thank you so much!

Lili

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# Memorandum

**To:** Lili Amini, Trump National Golf Club **From:** Eric Zahn, Tidal Influence, LLC

**Cc:** Spencer Langdon, Langdon Biological Consulting

**Date:** August 15, 2019
**Subject:** Annual California Gnatcatcher and Coastal Cactus Wren Surveys

The purpose of this communication is to provide Trump National Golf Club (TNGC) with a report on annual surveys for the coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica*) and the coastal cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) within the Ocean Trails Reserve and Shoreline Park in Ranchos Palos Verdes, California.

**Regulatory Setting:**
The Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for the golf course property has a long-term management program that requires, among other things, annual coastal California gnatcatcher and coastal cactus wren monitoring.

Section 4.11.1 of the HCP states the "Coastal California Gnatcatcher and Cactus Wren Monitoring will be conducted on an annual basis during the breeding season of these species. Annual surveys will begin upon the completion of the 5-year maintenance and monitoring program and shall continue until it is determined to be no longer necessary by the Restoration Ecologist and Biologist(s) and the Agencies. The surveys will focus on determining the extent and location of habitats used by coastal California Gnatcatchers and cactus wren on the site. All areas of appropriate habitat will be surveyed."

**Survey Methods and Results:**
Surveys for California gnatcatcher and coastal cactus wren were performed simultaneously by staff ecologists from Tidal Influence and Langdon Biological Consulting on Monday April 29th, 2019 (6:00am-11:00am), Monday May 20th, 2019 (6:30am-11:00am) and June 24, 2019 (7am-10am). All accessible habitat areas, comprising approximately 100 acres, within the Ocean Trails Preserve and Shoreline Park were surveyed (Figure 1).

Coastal California Gnatcatcher Surveys
All suitable and accessible coastal sage scrub habitat areas within the survey area were surveyed for the presence of coastal California gnatcatcher (CAGN). US Fish and Wildlife Services *Survey Protocol for the Coastal California Gnatcatcher* were followed and Spencer Langdon (Permit #839078-6) was present for all surveys. Surveys were conducted by slowly walking along existing trails adjacent to and within coastal sage scrub habitat. Surveyors scanned habitat areas with binoculars for the presence of CAGN individuals and when they were not observed CAGN vocalizations were broadcast to locate individuals. Vocalization broadcasting ceased once birds were located. Surveyors recorded whether an individual bird was male or female, a potential breeding pair, a potential family group, or a juvenile. The location of each bird was recorded using a Trimble Geo 7x handheld GPS unit outfitted with a Laser Rangefinder. The rangefinder allowed for the surveyors to record an exact location of the bird without trampling any vegetation. Approximate locations were also recorded by hand on an aerial map.

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A total of 19 potential CAGN breeding territories were observed (Figure 2) compared to 16 potential territories that were documented in 2018. We attribute this increase to the late timing of the 2018 surveys relative to peak breeding season. We saw a slight reduction in the number of potential breeding territories along the Oceans Trail Reserve which is attributed to the increased invasion of CAGN habitat area by annual invasive plant species which included *Brassica nigra* (black mustard), crown daisy (*Glebionis coronaria*), and Napa star thistle (*Centaurea melitensis*). Meanwhile we observed an increase in potential CAGN breeding territories in Shoreline Park despite the site also being intensely invaded by annual non-native vegetation. We attribute this increase to the increase in quality of the existing coastal sage scrub plant community due to the comparatively high precipitation levels this winter and spring. Regardless, both the Ocean Trails Reserve and Shoreline Park have potential to host many more CAGN breeding territories if a concerted multi-year effort were made to control the invasive plant populations and promote more contiguous areas of coastal sage scrub. It should be noted that the tall and dense non-native vegetation also makes the surveys more challenging as viewsheds are blocked, which limits visual observations in some areas.

Coastal Cactus Wren Surveys

All accessible patches of coastal prickly pear (*Opuntia littoralis*) and coastal cholla (*Cylindropuntia prolifera*) within the survey area were surveyed for the presence of coastal cactus wren (CAWR). Surveys were conducted by scanning cactus patches with binoculars looking for nests and perching or foraging individuals. CAWR vocalizations were broadcast to locate individuals when they were not observed, as well as in inaccessible locations like steep bluffs or dense cactus patches. Vocalization broadcasting ceased once birds were located. Surveyors recorded whether the observation was of a nest, an individual, or a pair.

A total of 2 potential CAWN breeding territories were observed (Figure 3) compared to 5 potential territories observed in 2018. This reduction is likely due to proliferation of *B. nigra* in and amongst the cactus. This was much more prominent in 2019 than it was in 2018. Herbivory from the non-native garden snail (*Cornu asperum*) also appears to be impacting the health of *O. littoralis*. The herbivory leads to rotting out of the cactus pads and an overall reduction in growth as the snails will target new cactus pad growth. The herbivory likely limits the prickly pear's ability to compete with the invasion of *B. nigra*. Since the cactus wren has been reportedly declining in the Palos Verdes Peninsula area, the following is a description of each observation:

**Location #1** – This patch of cactus is located between the East Portal Trail and Gnatcatcher Trail near the staircase entry point the comes down from Twin Harbor's View Drive. An individual was visually observed during the 2nd survey bout and a call was heard during the 1st and 3rd survey bouts.

**Location #2 –** This patch of cactus is located on the Catalina Trail just past its junction with the Gnatcatcher Trail several meters down the steep decline towards Shoreline Park. During the 3rd survey bout an individual was observed flying through the area and was heard calling from the bluff side.

**Recommendations:**

- Efforts to control *Brassica nigra* (black mustard), crown daisy (*Glebionis coronaria*), and Napa star thistle (*Centaurea melitensis*) in Ocean Trails Reserve and Shoreline Park should be considered in order to enhance habitat for CAGN and CAWR.

Figure 2. Coastal California Gnatcatcher locations.

Figure 3. Coastal Cactus Wren locations.

Figure 1. Survey Area.